

TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE FIELD NOTES

JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER ♦ DECEMBER 2010



VOLUME 6
NUMBER 2



Jerry Patterson

Commissioner

Larry Laine

Chief Clerk

Bill Warnick

General Counsel

Divisions

Administration

512.463.5291

Archives & Records

512.463.5277

Asset Management

512.475.1427

Coastal Resources

512.475.0773

Communications

512.463.5339

Energy Resources

512.463.5042

Human Resources

512.475.1390

Information Systems

512.463.5141

Legal Services

512.463.5009

Oil Spill

512.475.1575

Policy & Governmental Affairs

512.936.1905

Professional Services

512.936.1929

Renewable Energy

512.463.9210

Veterans Land Board

512.463.5060

Welcome to the General Land Office



Welcome to the Winter 2010 edition of *Field Notes*, the newsletter about the state's oldest and most diverse agency—the Texas General Land Office.

This edition has articles about exciting things that have happened at the Land Office over the last few months. One of these concerns the cancellation of what would have been the largest beach restoration in Texas history thanks to a lawsuit brought by a San Diego resident.

If it's been a few months since you've been to our website, you'll want to read the story about our website redesign project or visit us at <http://www.glo.texas.gov>. The new website is so much easier to use, but it took a huge effort to make it that way.

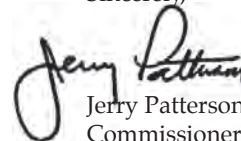
Another new feature at our agency is described in a piece about the rebranding of the Veterans Land Board to make it easier to remember.

The most touching article in this edition covers a return trip to Pearl Harbor by two men who survived the Japanese attack of Dec. 7, 1941 and now reside in a Texas State Veterans Home. Please don't miss this story about two great Texas heroes.

I love to brag about the wonderful Land Office staffers we have here, a surprising number of whom are naturalized U.S. citizens, like Michael Ashton-Moore, the subject of a story inside. Michael is one of our computer gurus and originally hails from the United Kingdom. Finally, you don't want to miss the article on the Fall Adopt-A-Beach Cleanup results, including the haul of odd items found on our beaches.

Thanks for taking time to learn about the General Land Office and its talented staff. If you have any questions, please refer to the last page where you'll find contact information for each department at the agency.

Sincerely,



Jerry Patterson
Commissioner

GLO Cancels West Galveston Island Beach Renourishment Project

Work on a West Galveston Island beach renourishment project (CEPRA 1391) was cancelled by Commissioner Jerry Patterson following a Texas Supreme Court opinion in a case brought forward by California-based Pacific Legal Foundation.

The \$40 million effort to restore and nourish six miles of beach—from the west end of the Galves-

ton Seawall to 13 Mile Road—was seen as a vital defense against high erosion rates threatening the island's tax base and infrastructure. The project's contractor was set to begin placing sand on the beach on November 15. Funding for the project would have come from the General Land Office's

Continued on Page 2

Inside This Issue

**Patterson Sends
Pearl Harbor Survivors
Back for Anniversary**

Page 3

**State's Oldest
Agency Unveils
Cutting-edge Website**

Page 4

**Veterans Land Board
Undergoes Corporate
Rebranding**

Page 5

Need to know more? Here's the Contact Information ... *Page 6*

GLO Cancels West Galveston Island Beach Project

Continued from Page 1

Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act Program with a mix of local, state and federal money.

"It's ironic that the Pacific Legal Foundation's actions will harm the beachfront property owners they claim to defend," Patterson said. "Without this beach project, beachfront property owners will eventually have a lot less property to own when erosion claims their property as state-owned 'wet beach.'"

Patterson said a recent Texas Supreme Court opinion in a case brought forward by California-based Pacific Legal Foundation has muddled the legal waters enough to delay the beach project indefinitely. With projected delay costs in the millions, Patterson decided to stop the \$40 million project.

"Our hands are tied now," Patterson said. "With this much money on the bubble, the delay caused by these legal questions makes it too costly to continue this project."

The Court ruling called into question the definition of the public beach easement, a key provision of the Texas Open Beaches Act. The Court ruled there is no public beach easement on the West Galveston Island beach targeted by the Land Office for renourishment. Without that easement, the Constitutional prohibition against spending public money to improve private property made the project impossible.

"You might win in court, but you can't litigate Mother Nature," Patterson said.



Before and after photos of a stretch of South Padre Island beach illustrate the benefits of renourishment projects.

Lone Star State Holds a Special Attraction for the GLO's Ashton-Moore

Mike Ashton-Moore, Team Leader for Information Systems' Network Support Team, joined the General Land Office in April 2001, making the move from New Jersey despite his wife being five-months pregnant at the time.

"Four months later we knew it was the best move we had made, reinforced by the events from our previous home in September," he said, referring to 9/11.

Ashton-Moore and his six-member team manage everything inside the Land Office data center, which ultimately drives almost every technology-related function in the agency.

The team's job is to support the agency's information technology needs, whenever it's needed.

"So from straightforward things like your H: drive to huge web-sites, the e-mail system or complex billing systems, they all run on the systems that we build and support," Ashton-Moore said.

Involved with technology since 1981, Ashton-Moore has been a network administrator since he joined the Land Office and likes it.

"Being able to say that you still enjoy your job after all this time is a really good feeling," he said. "Luckily, I also really enjoy working with the people in this agency. We have excellent people here. Having worked in small companies and huge multinationals, the GLO is by far one of the best places to work."

The Ashton-Moores—U.S. citizens originally from the United Kingdom—were drawn to the United States because of its technology. "It was also a challenge, much harder than staying where we were," Mike Ashton-Moore said. "But so worth it."

While Ashton-Moore was drawn to the United States, the Lone

Star State held a special attraction for him.

"Texas was the environment we wanted to raise our child in," he said. "It still has something that has been lost in so many other states and certainly lost in many parts of Europe. Gentlemen hold the door for a lady, still use "sir" and "ma'am," curse less, are Texans and Americans."

Ashton-Moore also admires Texans' loyalty to their state.

"My wife and I still sound like Brits, but our son is a true Texan and sounds like it," he said. "It still confuses people. It has taken many years, but I started to 'y'all' a while ago, I can be heard fixin' to do something and have finally been affected by cedar fever. I have found my real home."



Mike Ashton-Moore wasn't born in Texas, but the British expatriate got here as fast as he could.

Patterson Sends Pearl Harbor Survivors Back for Anniversary Memorial Service

Two Texans who helped fight off the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor 69 years ago returned to the site of the sneak attack for the 69th anniversary memorial services, thanks to the Texas State Veterans Home in Temple where the old heroes live.

Jerry Patterson, Chairman of the Veterans Land Board, said being able to fly the former shipmates to Hawaii for the rededication ceremonies of the USS Arizona Visitor Center is a privilege.

"The ceremonies are in honor of these gentlemen and the others who fought that day," Patterson said. "Honoring them for their service is the right thing to do."

Once shipmates aboard the *USS Phoenix*, Albert Kamenicky and Ben Russell each watched in horror as the *USS Arizona* sank in flames that fateful day, Dec. 7, 1941.

Kamenicky and Russell served with honor aboard the *USS Phoenix* for the duration of World War II. Now, the two are residents at the William R. Courtney Texas State Veterans Home in Temple. Both are members of an elite—and dwindling—fraternity.

On Friday, December 3—the day before their departure to Hawaii—the residents and staff at the veterans home held a Send Off Luau for Kamenicky and Russell sponsored by Texas Home Health Hospice. The news media attended and interviewed both men.

The following day, Kamenicky and Russell were escorted to the Greater Killeen Airport by Patriot Guard Riders and American Legion Riders on no less than 17 motorcycles, some with flags flying behind them. The Bell County Constable's office also joined the escort, with lights and sirens going and blocking every highway entrance, red light and stop sign the entire way.

Upon arrival at the airport, more than 30 soldiers were lining both sides of the walkway where the ambulance carrying the two veterans parked. Loudspeakers throughout the airport introduced both men as they exited the ambulance.

"Soldiers saluted as the residents, one by one, returned the salutes with a tear in their eye," said Donna Huffman, the VLB's On Site Representative at the Temple veterans home. "At the entrance door to the airport, Col. Terrence Hildner and his wife greeted



Al Kamenicky and Ben Russell receive invitations from Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson to travel to Pearl Harbor for the 69th anniversary and rededication of the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center. Both men were stationed aboard the *USS Phoenix* at Pearl Harbor during the Japanese attack on Dec. 7, 1941.

them with open arms. All the bikers came in and visited as well. The airport was filled with emotion and well wishes."

In addition to the Texas State Veterans Home in Temple where Kamenicky and Russell live, there are state veterans homes in Floresville, Big Spring, Bonham, McAllen, El Paso and Amarillo. Another is under construction in Tyler. Each home provides skilled, long-term nursing care, comprehensive rehabilitation programs, special diets, recreational activities, social services, a library, and a certified, secured Alzheimer's unit with its own secured outdoor courtyard. For more information on Texas State Veterans Homes and other veterans programs, call 1-800-252-VETS (8387), or visit the VLB at www.texasveterans.com.

About Commissioner Jerry Patterson

Jerry Patterson was born in Houston, Texas on November 15, 1946. He graduated from Texas A&M, Class of 1969 and received his commission in the United States Marine Corps. Volunteering for duty in Vietnam in 1972, Patterson was later designated as a Naval Flight Officer and served in Marine fighter squadrons until his retirement from the Marine Corps Reserve as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1993.

Five consecutive generations of Patterson's family have served our nation in time of war.

As state senator for District 11 (Harris, Galveston, Brazoria), Patterson's major legislative successes include passage of the historic concealed handgun law, a constitutional amendment allowing home equity lending, the state coastal management plan and the creation of the Texas State Veterans Home Program. A tireless advocate for his fellow veterans, he chaired

the first Veterans Affairs committee in the Texas Senate.

Since his election as Texas Land Commissioner in 2002, Patterson has modernized and revitalized the Texas General Land Office, the oldest agency in Texas. He has diversified and increased the Permanent School Fund, made Texas a renewable energy leader, protected state lands and overseen the greatest expansion of veterans benefits since World War II.

Jerry resides in Austin and has four children: twins Samantha and Cole, born in 2004, and Emily and Travis. His daughter Emily is an attorney working in Kosovo for an agency funded, in part, by the U.S. State Department. His son Travis is a graduate of Texas A&M, where he was commissioned as a Marine Lieutenant. Travis recently returned from serving his 2nd tour of duty in Iraq as a U.S. Marine attack helicopter pilot.

State's Oldest Agency Unveils Cutting-edge Website



The Texas General Land Office recently unveiled a website—www.glo.texas.gov—with a sleek, corporate feel that reflects the professional evolution of the state's oldest agency.

"The Texas General Land Office operates more like a business than any other state agency, and this new website reflects that," said Jerry Patterson, Commissioner of the Texas General Land Office. "I hope everyone will take a moment to visit www.glo.texas.gov, take a look around and tell us what you think."

The website redesign is the first in more than 15 years for the Land Office. The old website had grown to more than 20,000 pages, had many bad links, outdated information, circular navigation and didn't market the agency to the public in a positive, unified way.

On a visitor's first visit to www.glo.texas.gov, Patterson's image springs to life and speaks a welcoming message: "Welcome to the new Texas General Land Office website. I hope you'll take a moment to learn more about the agency and our mission. Let us know

how we can help, and thanks for your interest." On a visitor's second visit, Patterson welcomes them back.

"This website represents a whole new approach to how the Land Office interacts with Texans and our business customers," Patterson said. "This redesign shifts the website away from bureaucracy and jargon to present the agency in a much more organized, easy to use way."

The Land Office's new homepage—which features a stunning photo of the Guadalupe Mountains—is meant to be minimalist and focus a visitor's attention on the top agency news, user-friendly navigation and an innovative display of the agency's best known public programs. A new feature called MegaMenu allows visitors to jump to almost any page on the website in one or two clicks—a well-understood concept in Web marketing.

"We've had teams of smart people working for months to make this website as easy to use as it can be," Patterson said. "It's now simple enough that even I can use it."

But the Land Office website is not just a marketing tool. It's a business tool. For example, private oil and gas companies producing on school fund lands report how much they owe via downloadable forms every day. It's vital that the Land Office's website not only works well, but is easy to use.

The website redesign was long overdue—the better part of five years in the making, said Land Office Communications Director Mark Loeffler, who led the effort.

"The website represents an introduction to our agency for many Texans, so it has been 're-imagined' with them in mind," Loeffler said. "From easy navigation, jargonless text and 'How Do I' questions, to consistent use of images and color, this website sets a new standard for state agencies."

www.glo.texas.gov

This Holiday Season

GIVE THE GIFT OF TEXAS HISTORY

SAVE TEXAS HISTORY!
★★ GENERAL LAND OFFICE
PRESERVATION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

- ★ MAP REPRODUCTIONS
- ★ CALENDARS
- ★ NOTECARDS
- ★ HISTORY CDs

ORDER ONLINE OR BY PHONE AT SAVETEXASHISTORY.ORG ★ 1.800.998.4GLO

AAB Volunteers Cleanup 172 Tons of Trash

More than 8,815 volunteers joined forces on Saturday, September 25th for the 24th Annual Texas General Land Office Adopt-A-Beach Fall Cleanup. The volunteers removed 172.7 tons of trash from more than 167 miles of Texas coast.

"The turnout this year was great," said Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson. "I think our social media efforts to reach surfers, fishermen—people who care about the beach—through Facebook and other online media is really starting to have an effect."

Volunteers found the usual cigarette butts as well as beer cans, an Oriental rug, an empty beer box with a 24-inch rattle snake living inside, a vial of heroin (which was turned over to law enforcement), a prom corsage, an intravenous fluid bag, a TV, and a bottle of catsup from Japan.

The Texas General Land Office Adopt-A-Beach Cleanup is an all-volunteer effort to remove trash from Texas' shores. Coastal cleanups are held three times each year. The program's success is due to the hard work of volunteers, including local coordinators who work many unpaid hours publicizing the cleanups in coastal communities.

Since 1986, more than 406,000 Adopt-A-Beach volunteers have picked up more than 7,800 tons of trash from Texas beaches, some of it originating from as far away as South America. Volunteers record data on the trash to learn more about the causes of marine debris and to help mitigate pollution along Texas' 367 miles of coastline.

The next coastwide cleanup will be the Spring Adopt-A-Beach effort scheduled for April 30, 2011.



Packery Channel participants putting their game plan together.

Did you know ...

... the Land Office's Oil Spill Division

keeps track of almost 18,000

vessels through its online

submissions database?

Veterans Land Board Undergoes Corporate Rebranding

After 64 years of faithful service, the Veterans Land Board—or VLB—has a new look to spread the word that veterans benefits in Texas aren't limited to land anymore.

"The VLB offers Texas veterans more than just a land loan nowadays," Commissioner Jerry Patterson said. "From low-cost land and home loans to long-term, high-quality nursing care and free burial in any of three Texas State Veterans Cemeteries, the VLB has grown and we want to get the word out."

A new logo and slogan are the most visible signs of this change, and both will be featured prominently on the agency's website and in a new TV and radio ad campaign. And for the first time the VLB has embraced social media. Veterans may now share VLB news via their own social networks with easy links from the VLB's home page. Or veterans can keep up with VLB news via Facebook or Twitter.

The new brand helps modernize and simplify the VLB's presentation to the public, Patterson said. Like IBM, NBC and other well-known corporations, using the initials of the Veterans Land Board like a corporate brand will make the agency more identifiable.

The VLB was created in 1946 after Texas voters approved a constitutional amendment authorizing \$25 million in bonds to help World War II veterans buy land.

Since then, the land and home loan program has funded nearly

\$1 billion in loans and become a popular option for veterans looking to buy the American Dream.

The VLB has also built seven—soon to be eight—Texas State Veterans Homes, where veterans and their spouses enjoy peace of mind in their golden years. The homes, in Amarillo, Big Spring,

Bonham, El Paso, Floresville, McAllen, Temple and soon Tyler, filled a need by offering comprehensive rehabilitation programs, special diets, recreational activities, social services, libraries, and a certified, secured Alzheimer's unit in each home.

In addition, the VLB has built three Texas State Veterans Cemeteries—in Abilene, Killeen and Mission—and is hard at work on another in Corpus Christi. Texas veterans are entitled to

free burial with full military honors at each of these magnificent facilities.

"Veterans benefits are not given, they are earned," Patterson said. "But according to the data, we've got our work cut out for us."

A little more than a year ago, the VLB surveyed Texas veterans and learned some sobering statistics. The VLB has been serving our veterans since 1946, but only 8.7 percent of those asked could provide the name of the board without prompting, even though they're eligible for VLB benefits.

With a new appearance, the VLB is ready to continue its mission of providing all Texas veterans with the best benefits in the nation.



Texas General Land Office Contact Information

1700 N. Congress Avenue, Austin Texas 78701-1495 ♦ P.O. Box 12873, Austin, Texas 78711-2873
Phone: 512.463.5001 ♦ Fax: 512.475.1558

Commissioner

Jerry Patterson

512.463.5256

jerry.patterson@glo.texas.gov

Deputy Land Commissioner
& Chief Clerk

Larry Laine

512.936.1927

larry.laine@glo.texas.gov

Chief Administrative Officer

James LeGrand

512.475.1269

james.legrand@glo.texas.gov

Archives & Records

Deputy Commissioner

Mark Lambert

512.463.5277

mark.lambert@glo.texas.gov

Asset Management

Deputy Commissioner

Hal Croft

512.475.1427

hal.croft@glo.texas.gov

Financial Management

Deputy Commissioner

Gary Hagood

512.463.5001

gary.hagood@glo.texas.gov

Internal Audit

Deputy Commissioner

Tracey Hall

512.463.6078

tracey.hall@glo.texas.gov

Coastal Resources

Deputy Commissioner

Helen Young

512.463.5338

helen.young@glo.texas.gov

Office of Communications

Director

Mark Loeffler

512.463.5339

mark.loeffler@glo.texas.gov

Energy Resources

Deputy Commissioner

Louis Renaud

512.305.9104

louis.renaud@glo.texas.gov

Funds Management

Deputy Commissioner

Rusty Martin

512.463.5120

rusty.martin@glo.texas.gov

Legal Services

General Counsel & Deputy Commissioner

Bill Warnick

512.463.5007

bill.warnick@glo.texas.gov

Office of Policy & Governmental Affairs

Deputy Commissioner

Trace Finley

512.936.1908

trace.finley@glo.texas.gov

Human Resources and Risk Management

Deputy Commissioner

Terri Loeffler

512.475.1390

terri.loeffler@glo.texas.gov

Information Systems

Deputy Commissioner

Stephen Paxman

512.463.5141

stephen.paxman@glo.texas.gov

Oil Spill Prevention & Response

Deputy Commissioner

Greg Pollock

512.463.5329

greg.pollock@glo.texas.gov

Agency Ombudsman

Mike Dunn

512.463.6860

michael.dunn@glo.texas.gov

Professional Services

Deputy Commissioner

Rene Truan

512.463.5200

rene.truan@glo.texas.gov

Renewable Energy

Deputy Commissioner

Dwain Rogers

512.936.1962

dwain.rogers@glo.texas.gov

Veterans Land Board

Deputy Commissioner

& Executive Secretary

Paul Moore

512.463.5060

paul.moore@glo.texas.gov

Agency Newsletters

Veterans Voice

http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/_publications/veterans-voice-10-05-10.pdf

On the Coast

http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/_publications/onthe-coast1010.pdf

The Responder

http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/_publications/ responder_september2010.pdf

Saving Texas History

http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/history-and-archives/_publications/STH-Newsletter-summer2010.pdf

Cabin Connection

http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/_publications/Cabin-Connection-06-10.pdf

Adopt-A-Beach

http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/_publications/aab_newsletter_fall2010.pdf

Voices of Veterans

http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/_publications/vov-newsletter-winter-2010.pdf

Please give us your feedback

For comments or suggestions about this newsletter, please contact Paul Sturrock at paul.sturrock@glo.texas.gov or call 512.936.1948.

If you would like to unsubscribe, please click on the link above and write unsubscribe on the subject line.